

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### BLOMMER CHOCOLATE COMPANY

Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center

#### Bloomer Makes Chocolate the Lean Way

##### Client Profile:

Blommer Chocolate is the largest cocoa bean processor and chocolate manufacturer in North America. Founded in 1939, the company serves customers around the world. Blommer employs 100 people at its facility in East Greenville, Pennsylvania.

##### Situation:

Blommer has been enjoying consistent double-digit growth in an industry that grows about two percent annually. In the past, the company had invested heavily in capital equipment. In 2004, Blommer decided that it was time to make an investment in employee development and operations process improvement. The company's goal was to provide an understanding of manufacturing principles that would enable employees to experience personal growth while helping the company better manage its rapidly increasing business. Blommer contacted the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

DVIRC recommended the implementation of Lean Enterprise, a systematic approach to identifying and eliminating waste that makes an immediate impact on the productivity and effectiveness of the business. First, DVIRC helped Blommer to establish a leadership steering committee. Subsequently, DVIRC facilitated meetings in which the committee set priorities, identified and formalized metrics to continuously monitor key elements of the business targeted for improvement, and allocated resources. Since Lean Transformation requires a culture change, DVIRC designed and delivered a customized training program for the entire workforce, beginning with in-depth training of managers, supervisors and group leaders. In addition, a number of people completed the Lean certification program at DVIRC. To enhance operational excellence, DVIRC also assisted Blommer with Lean process analysis and cross training in key areas. This included organizing a number of Kaizen events, focused short-term projects designed to drive culture change and improve processes in various areas of the plant.

##### Results:

- \* Realized \$50,000 in employee time savings.
- \* Increased throughput by 5 percent per week.
- \* Reduced rework levels by 50 percent.
- \* Reduced waste by 30 percent.

##### Testimonial:

"Lean transformation has created a very positive culture change for us. The training and Kaizen events provided by DVIRC have really helped people to work together cross functionally. Today we

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have employees on the floor who are proactively driving our Lean initiative. The process improvements we've made combined with a culture change that embraces leadership, strategic planning and operational excellence are enabling us to operate more efficiently, make continuous improvement and more effectively manage Blommer's dramatic growth. We continue to draw upon DVIRC's outstanding expertise in our ongoing Lean transformation efforts."

Christopher Milligan , Manager, Plant Operations